

# NEWS RELEASE



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## Imagine Children's Museum Opens \$25 million Addition

*Museum doubles in size; More space for children and families to playfully learn together*

*Built in response to strong visitor demand in fast-growing Snohomish County*

**EVERETT, WA** — Celebrating a five-year, community-wide effort to build additional space to nurture children's development, Imagine Children's Museum hosted a Ribbon Cutting ceremony to mark the grand opening of its newly expanded facility on Saturday, October 29.

Imagine is a dynamic learning institution for children ages 1-12 and their families and is a popular destination for field trips. More than a thousand visitors – including museum donors, board members and local families – celebrated the opening of the \$25 million addition, which was built to address user demand and the anticipated population growth of the Puget Sound region.

"Imagine has become a unique cornerstone in Snohomish County by providing a safe, welcoming place where children and their families can spend quality time playfully learning together year-round," said Executive Director Nancy Johnson. "Our expanded facility will increase hands-on exhibits and programs that foster 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning skills, and experiences that help strengthen children's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development. This is especially important as children recover from the learning losses and other challenges from the pandemic."

The expansion doubles the size of the original museum at Wall Street and Hoyt Avenue by adding three new floors and 12 new state-of-the-art playful learning galleries. Each gallery is designed to be child-centered and to inspire a lifelong love of learning through play. It includes original exhibits showcasing the Pacific Northwest, the Puget Sound and Port of Everett; an engineering gallery; a tinker shop where children can learn to use real tools; an exhibit about woodlands; an exhibit about package distribution; a "marine ecosystems" exhibit; and a few others. These compliment the museum's original exhibits, which include an Everett Transit bus, a miniature locomotive track, and a water works area.

Imagine Children's Museum first opened its doors at the corner of Wall Street and Hoyt Avenue in 2004 with a vision to serve 60,000 visitors a year. But by 2018, it was often overcrowded with lines out the door as it clocked 230,000 annual visitors. The museum's *Imagine the Possibilities Expansion Project* was launched to provide less-crowded, higher-impact access for all families in the region,

including low-income and underserved families, and to grow services that support inclusion, diversity, equity and improve overall quality of life. Donors to date include several local families, foundations, the State of Washington, and Snohomish County.

“When started this project in late 2017, we had no idea of the unpredictability that would lie ahead, but we were determined to meet the growing demand for our programs and services that enrich children’s lives through playful learning,” said Johnson. “Throughout this journey, I’ve been humbled by the many community members who have come together to make this dream a reality for families in Snohomish County. It will have countless impacts on generations to come.”

The 33,000 square foot addition meets LEED standards for efficient, carbon-saving green building, and will achieve LEED Silver certification for its sustainable design and construction. It was built utilizing Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) and an overall wood structural system. This is the first building in Everett to utilize this nationally recognized sustainable building system.

“It has been exciting to with all of the various individuals from museum staff to engineers and construction team members,” said Adam Clark, owner and principal of 2812 Architecture, the Everett-based firm that designed the expanded facility. “Throughout the process, I’ve been surprised by the support and encouragement of local sponsors and donors. Everyone involved should be proud to have been a part of this project that will truly benefit the region.”

Museum members and the public have had an opportunity to visit the bigger museum during its “soft opening” phase, which began on August 19. This phase, common among children’s museums, is used to fine-tune operational systems, visitor experiences and interactive, hands-on exhibits that require significant staff training.

Regular museum hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. Adults must be accompanied by a child. Tickets and annual membership packages, which allow unlimited visits, are available at the door. In addition to daily admission, Imagine offers field trips, enrichment classes, an on-site preschool, seasonal camps, birthday parties, facility rentals and traveling exhibits and programs.

Imagine relies on grants and donations to bring its services to the community. To support the *Imagine the Possibilities Expansion Project* or to contribute to the *Play with a Purpose Annual Fund*, contact [giving@imaginecm.org](mailto:giving@imaginecm.org).

### **About Imagine Children’s Museum**

*In 1988, an informal assessment showed Snohomish County lacked resources where families with young children, ages 1-12, could spend quality time together. The Museum incorporated in 1991, and has remained a grassroots, independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and an integral resource for children, families, schools, youth organizations and social service agencies in Snohomish County and beyond. In 2017 Imagine achieved American Alliance of Museums accreditation, the highest national recognition afforded the nation’s museums, becoming first accredited children’s museum in the Pacific Northwest. It has a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America’s leading independent evaluator of charities for financial health, accountability, and transparency. To learn more, go to [www.imaginecm.org](http://www.imaginecm.org).*